In the Abstract:

Managing assigned fingers in wireless telecommunication, such as Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA), using a finger lock mechanism. The method includes a series of steps, including a first step of receiving a finger assignment from a searcher portion of a communication device. Next, the signal-strength of the finger assignment is determined, and a time period over which the signal-strength exists is determined. The finger assignment is then compared to multiple signal-strength thresholds and to a time threshold. In the next step, the finger assignment is evaluated for a combing operation based upon which of the aforementioned thresholds it satiates. In particular, the finger assignment is enabled for a combining operation if it is a new[[ly]] finger assignment or if it continues to satiate a combine signal-strength threshold. Alternatively, the finger assignment is not enabled for combining but neither is it deassigned (e.g., a locked state) if it fails to satiate the combine signal-strength threshold but does satiate the lock signal-strength threshold without exceeding the time threshold. Lastly, control of the finger assignment is passed to the searcher if the finger assignment fails to satiate the lock signal-strength threshold.